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ABSTRACT

This booklet provides snapshots of teachers' work lives, using information obtained from previous Schools and Staffing Surveys (SASS). The SASS is a set of integrated questionnaires that collect information nationwide about schools and the staff who work in them. A wide variety of schools complete the surveys. The SASS Teacher Questionnaire asks teachers about many topics, including their workloads; their experience, education, and professional development; their influence over school policies; and their perceptions of school climate. This booklet's sections examine the following: teachers' working hours; time spent teaching core subjects; teachers' control and influence in the classroom; teachers' control and influence in the school; professional development; teacher satisfaction in the public schools; teacher satisfaction in private schools; and average class size. (SM)

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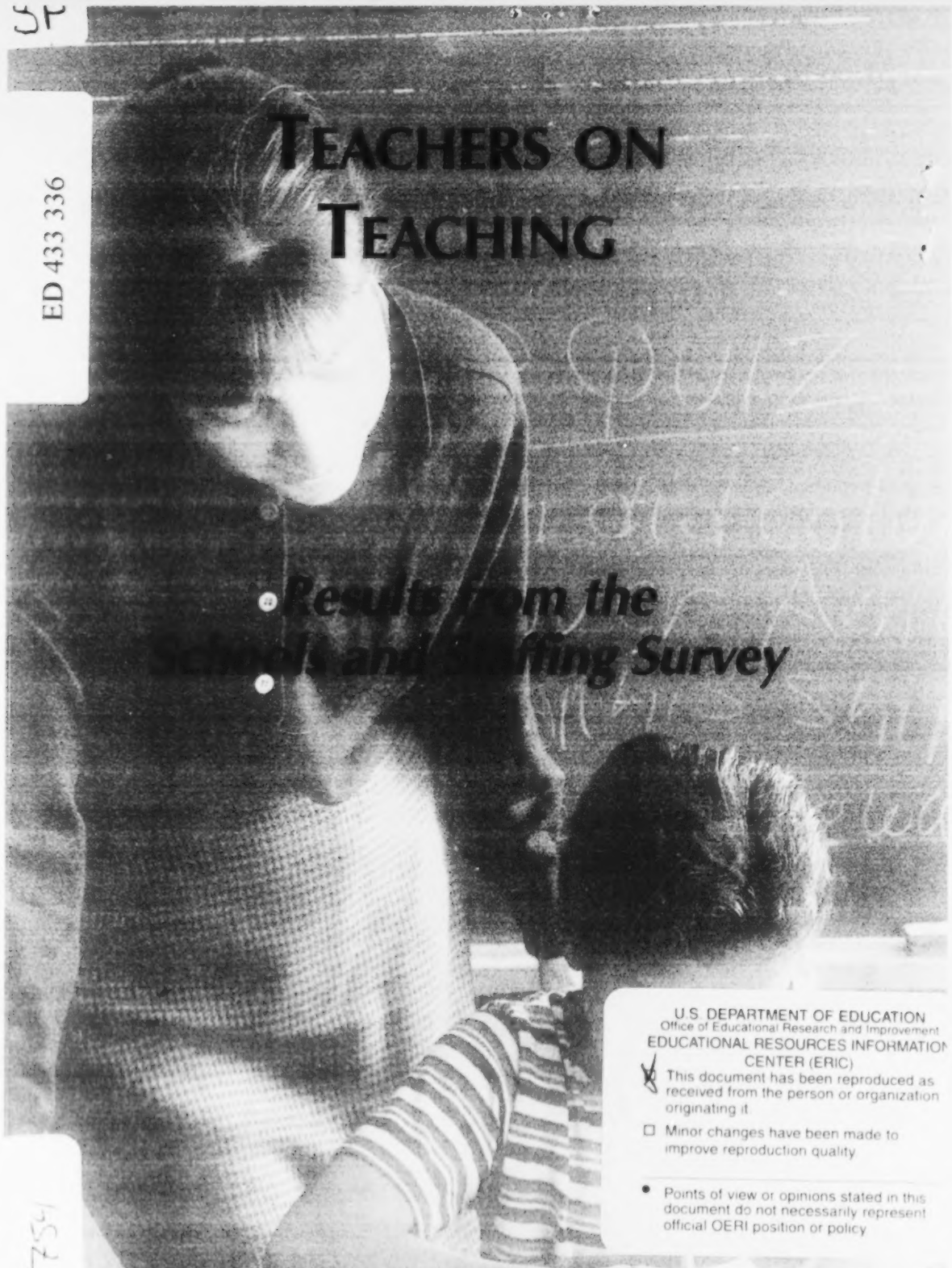
ED 433 336

TEACHERS ON TEACHING

Results from the Schools and Staffing Survey



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TEACHERS ON TEACHING

Results from the Schools and Staffing Survey

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INTRODUCTION

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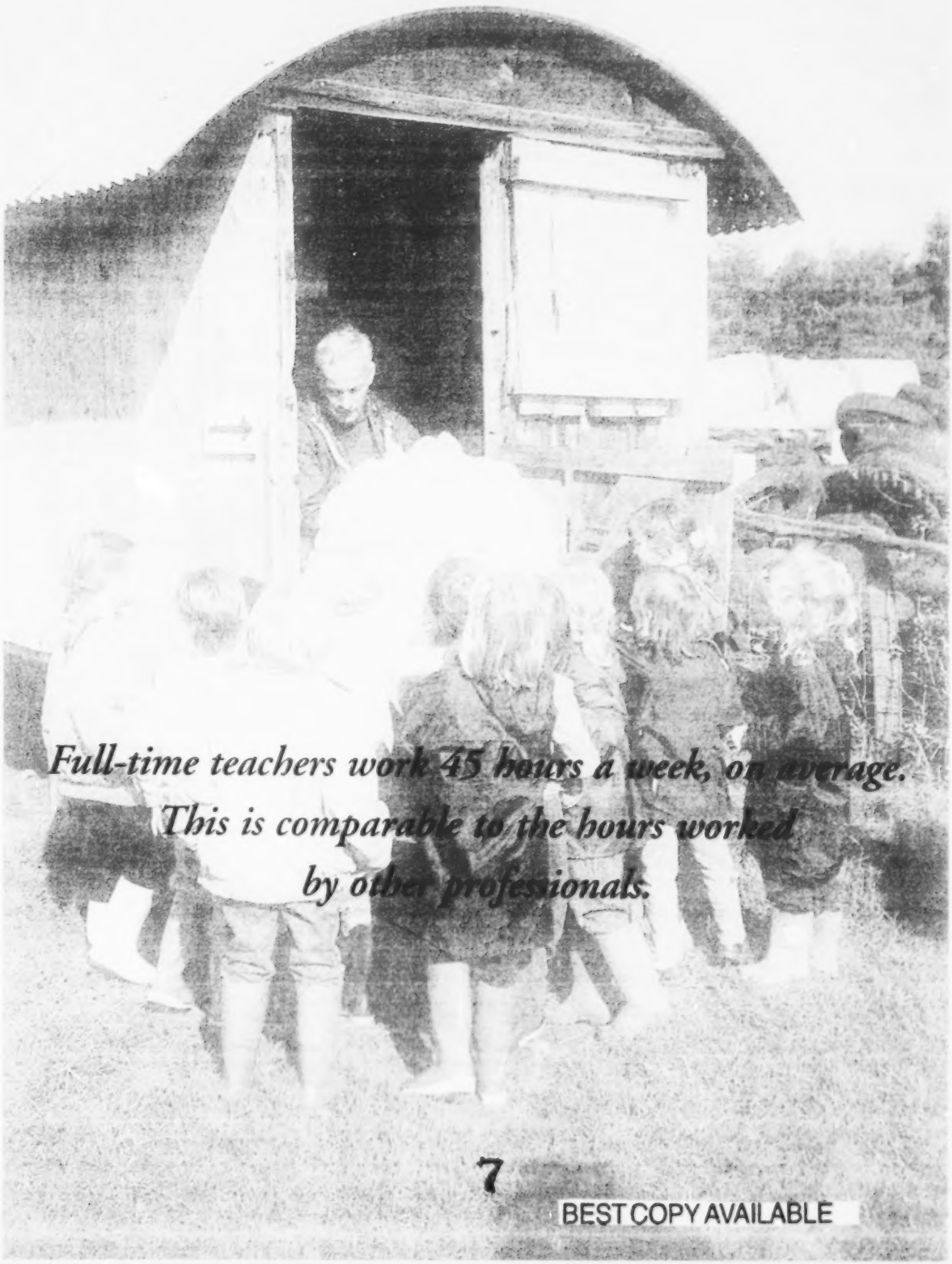
This booklet provides a few snapshots of teachers' work lives, using the information obtained from previous Schools and Staffing Surveys (SASS). We hope you will find it interesting and useful.

The SASS is a set of integrated questionnaires that collect information about schools and the staff who work in them. In order to assemble a complete picture of K–12 schooling in the U.S., separate questionnaires ask for information from a random sample of schools, their principals, their school district (for public schools only), and a subset of the teachers in each school. A wide variety of schools are surveyed, including public and private schools and those administered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Native American tribes or Alaska Natives.

Teachers' views are critical to presenting an accurate picture of schooling in the United States. The SASS Teacher Questionnaire asks teachers about many topics, including their workloads; their experience, education, and professional development; their influence over school policies; and their perceptions of school climate. The final page of this booklet tells you how to obtain free publications that present more information from the survey.

SASS data are used by many people who are interested in K–12 education, including teacher professional organizations, private school associations, public school policymakers, and journalists. These data are most useful when they describe contemporary conditions in schools. However, the most recent data available from the SASS was collected in 1993–94. As the student population grows in size and diversity and as the country debates how to improve schools, the need for current data is urgent. Your participation in the survey contributes to the efforts of many people toward improving schools for America's students.

TEACHERS' WORKING HOURS



Full-time teachers work 45 hours a week, on average. This is comparable to the hours worked by other professionals.

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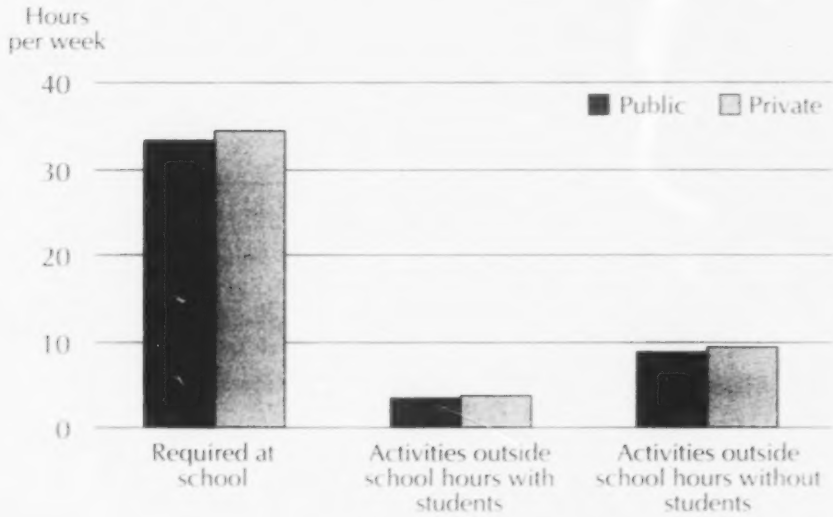
Teachers' Working Hours

- Of the 2.9 million U.S. teachers in 1993–94, 89 percent were regular full-time teachers, 7 percent were regular part-time teachers, and 4 percent were itinerant or long-term substitute teachers.

- Overall, full-time teachers worked an average of 45 hours a week, although they were required to be at school for only 33 of those hours. They used the other 12 hours to prepare lessons, grade homework, work with individual students, attend meetings, and supervise extracurricular activities.

- Teachers in private schools were required to be at school for slightly more time each week, and also spent a little more time on work activities outside school hours than public school teachers.

Average hours per week that full-time teachers spent working in various capacities: 1993–94



SOURCE: Schools and Staffing Survey: 1993–94 (Teacher Questionnaire).

TIME SPENT TEACHING

CORE SUBJECTS

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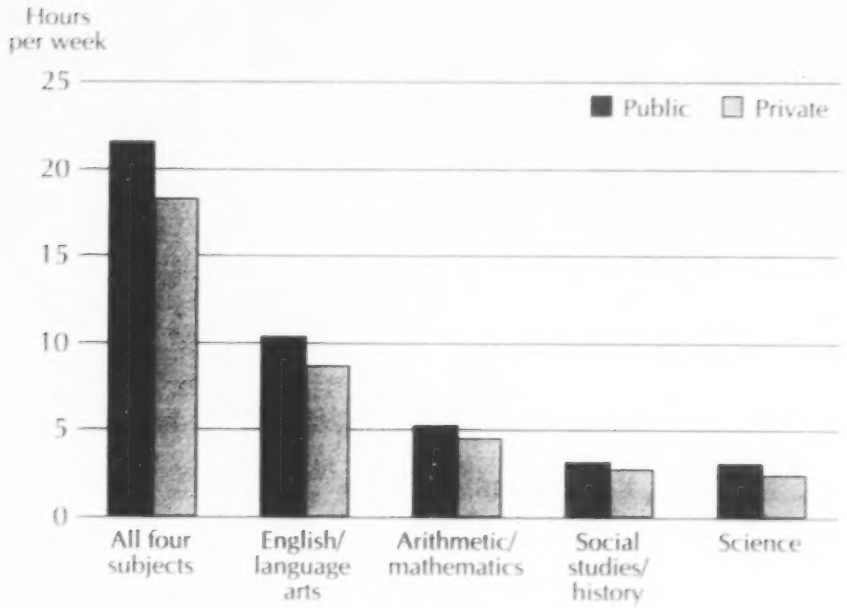
Time Spent Teaching Core Subjects

- Elementary school teachers in self-contained classrooms spent an average of 21 hours per week teaching core academic subjects. About 10 of those hours were spent teaching English, reading, or language arts.

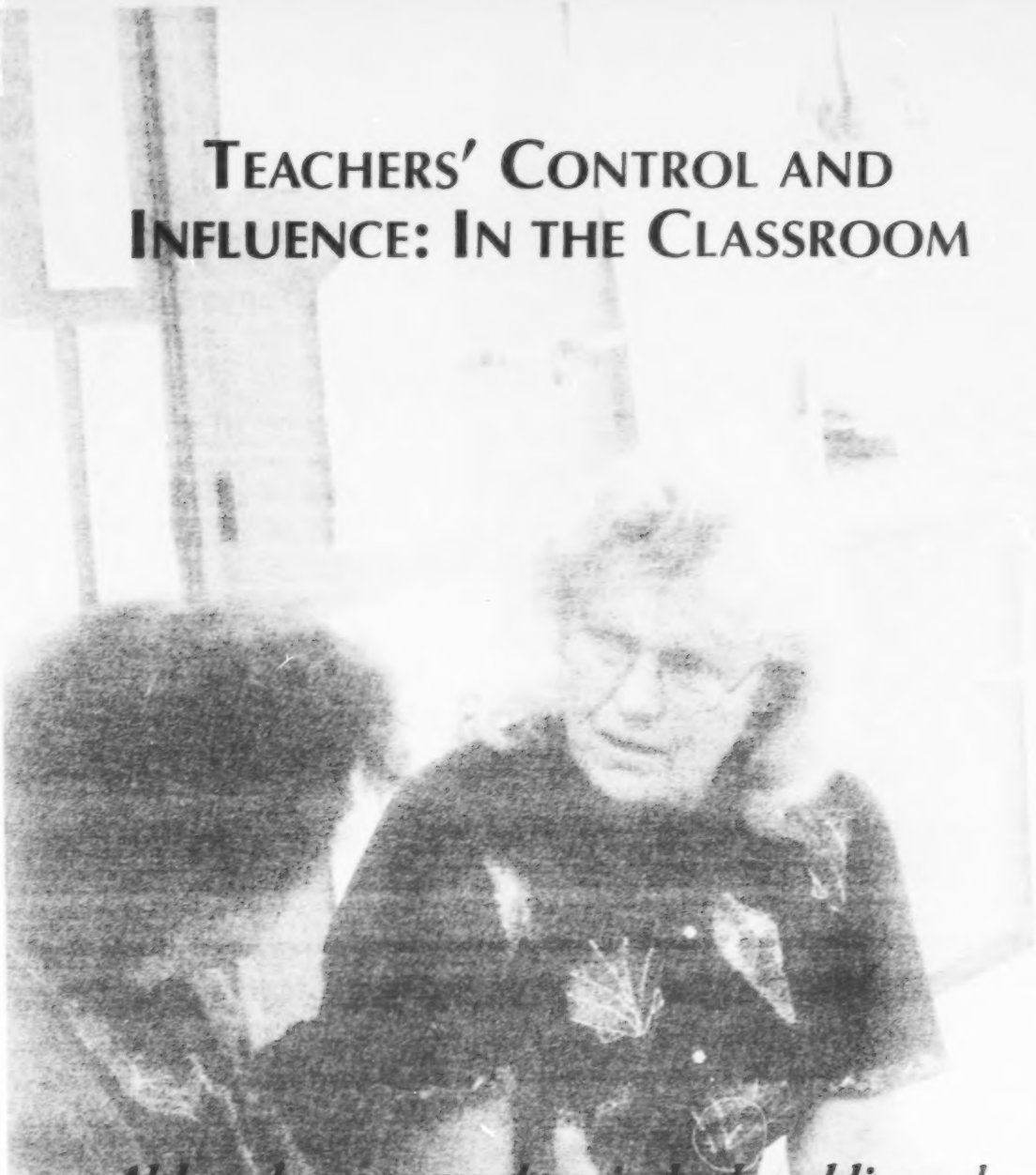
- Public elementary school teachers spent slightly more time on each of the four core subjects than did their private school counterparts. Total time spent teaching the core subjects was 21 hours on average for public school teachers and 18 hours for private school teachers.

Average hours per week elementary school teachers spent teaching core subjects: 1993–94



SOURCE: Schools and Staffing Survey: 1993–94 (Teacher Questionnaire).

TEACHERS' CONTROL AND INFLUENCE: IN THE CLASSROOM



Although many teachers in both public and private schools thought they had a lot of control over classroom-level decisions, fewer thought they had similar influence over school-level decisions.

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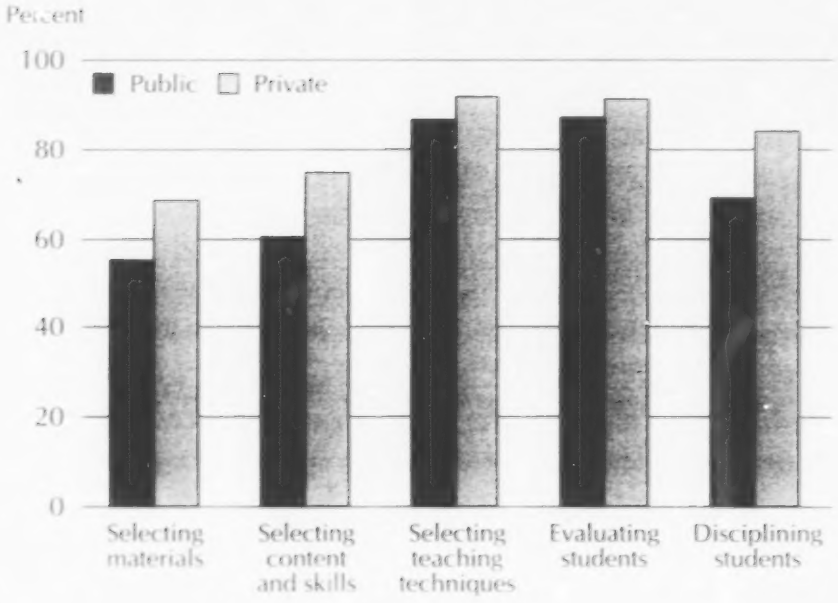
Teachers' Control and Influence: In the Classroom

Some school reform advocates propose that teachers should have more control over their work at both the classroom and school levels.

- More than one-half of all teachers felt that they had a lot of control in their classrooms over each of five areas covered in the SASS questionnaire.

- Private school teachers were more likely than public school teachers to report that they had a lot of control in many areas, such as selecting materials, selecting content and skills to be taught, and disciplining students.

Percentage of teachers who reported that they had a lot of control over various classroom decisions: 1993–94



SOURCE: Schools and Staffing Survey: 1993–94 (Teacher Questionnaire).

TEACHERS' CONTROL AND INFLUENCE:

IN THE SCHOOL

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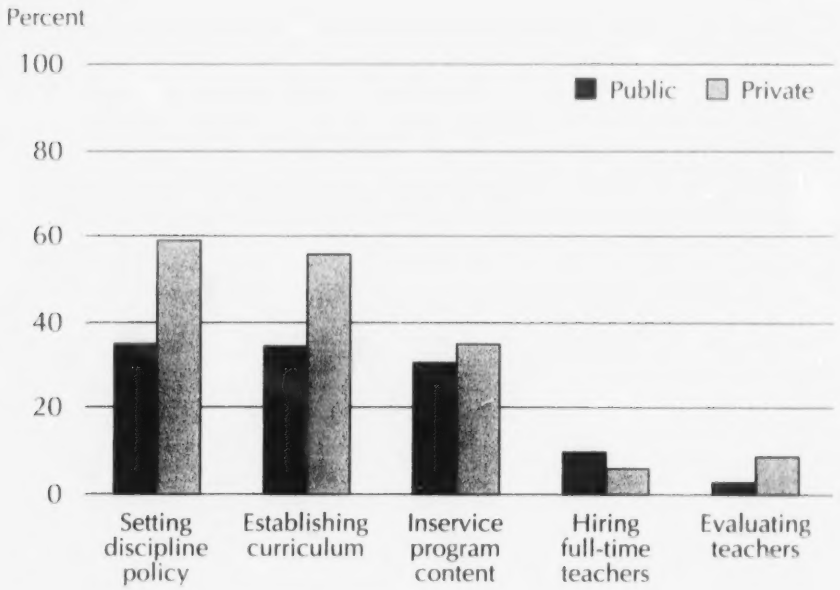
Teachers' Control and Influence: In the School

- Fewer than one-half of all public school teachers felt they had a lot of influence over any of five areas of school-level policy and decision-making.

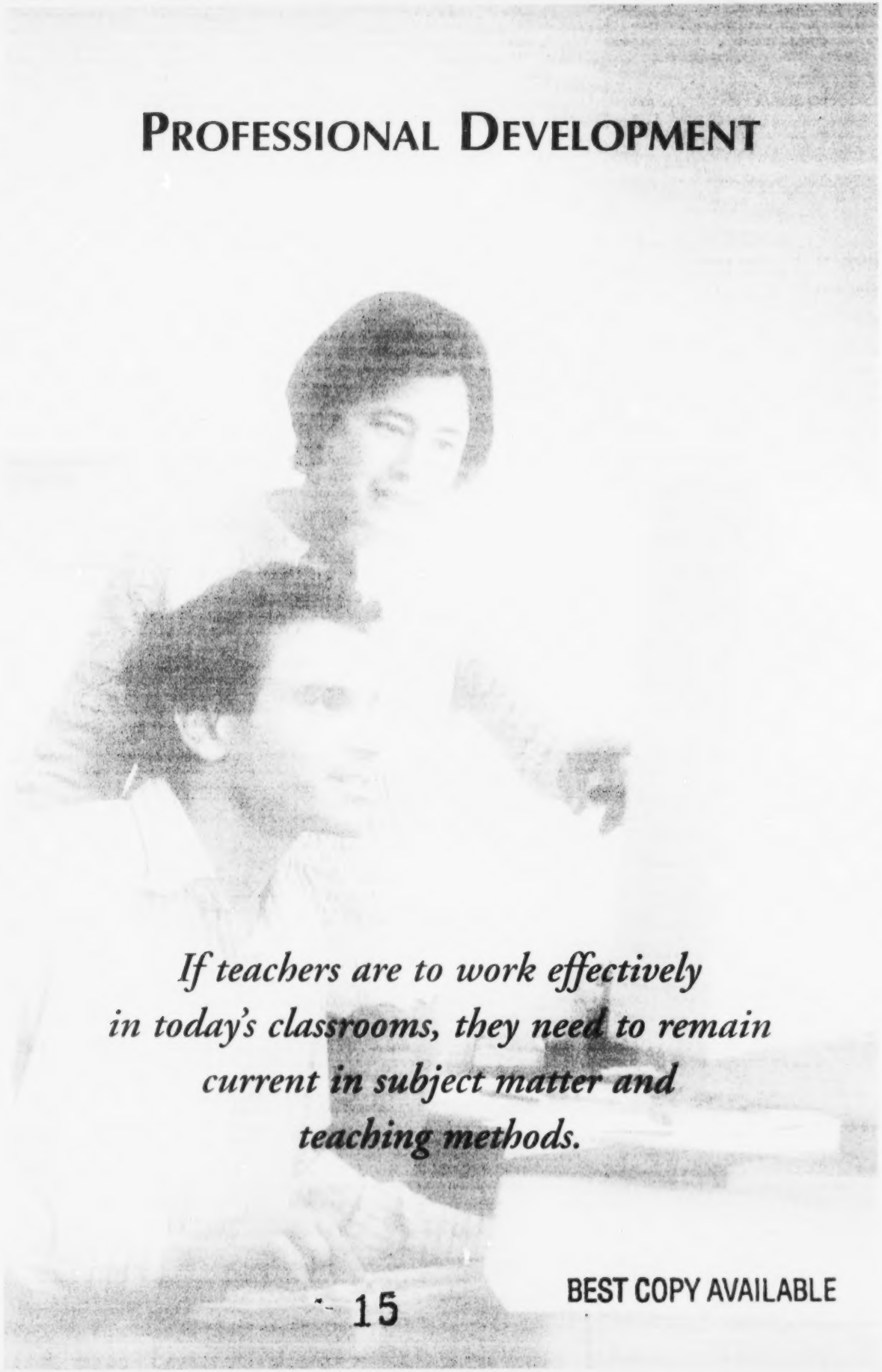
- Private school teachers were more likely than public school teachers to think they had a lot of influence over a number of school policy areas, including setting discipline policy, establishing curriculum, determining the content of in-service programs, and evaluating teachers.

Percentage of teachers who reported that teachers in their school had a lot of influence on various areas of school policy: 1993–94



SOURCE: Schools and Staffing Survey: 1993–94 (Teacher Questionnaire).

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



If teachers are to work effectively in today's classrooms, they need to remain current in subject matter and teaching methods.

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Professional Development

Close to 90 percent of all public school teachers in 1993–94 had participated in professional development in one of five popular topics since the end of the previous school year (data not shown below).

- On each of the five topics, public school teachers were more likely than their counterparts in private schools to have participated in recent training.
- No more than one-half of the teachers who participated in a program on any of these topics reported that the program lasted more than a day (data not shown below).

Percentage of teachers who participated in professional development programs on each of several topics since the end of the previous school year: 1993–94

	Teaching methods in field	Student assessment	Cooperative learning	Educational technology	In-depth study of subject
Total	72.4	57.0	56.7	54.4	33.7
Public	72.6	58.3	57.7	56.0	34.0
Private	70.8	47.1	49.1	42.0	31.2

SOURCE: Schools and Staffing Survey: 1993–94 (Teacher Questionnaire).

TEACHER SATISFACTION:

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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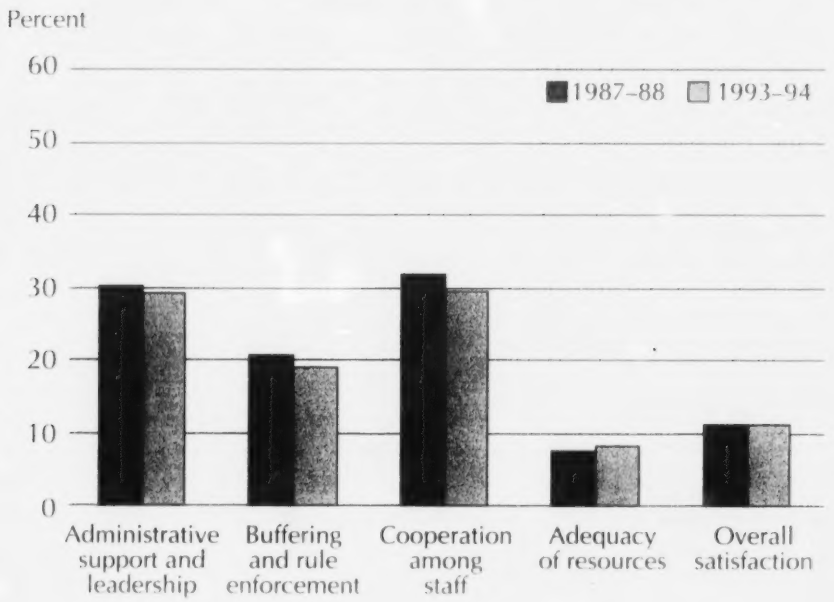
Teacher Satisfaction: Public Schools

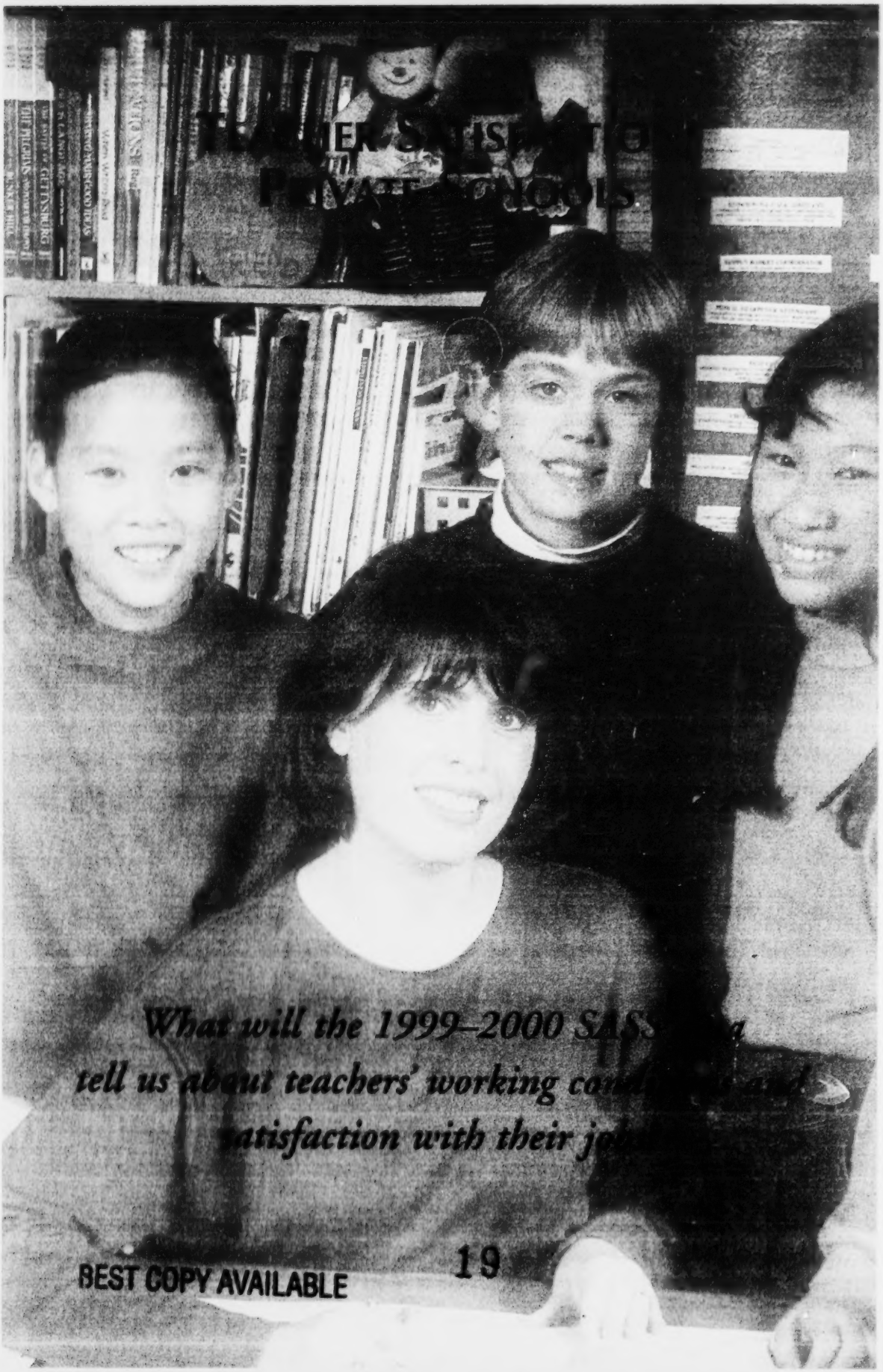
The SASS also asks teachers to report how they feel about their working conditions.

- No more than 30 percent of public school teachers were highly satisfied with any of several aspects of their work in 1993–94.
- Public school teachers were more likely to be highly satisfied with their schools' administrative support and leadership and with cooperation among staff than with the adequacy of the resources available in their schools.

Percentage of public school teachers who were highly satisfied with aspects of their working conditions: 1987–88 and 1993–94



SOURCE: Schools and Staffing Survey: 1987–88 and 1993–94 (Teacher Questionnaire).



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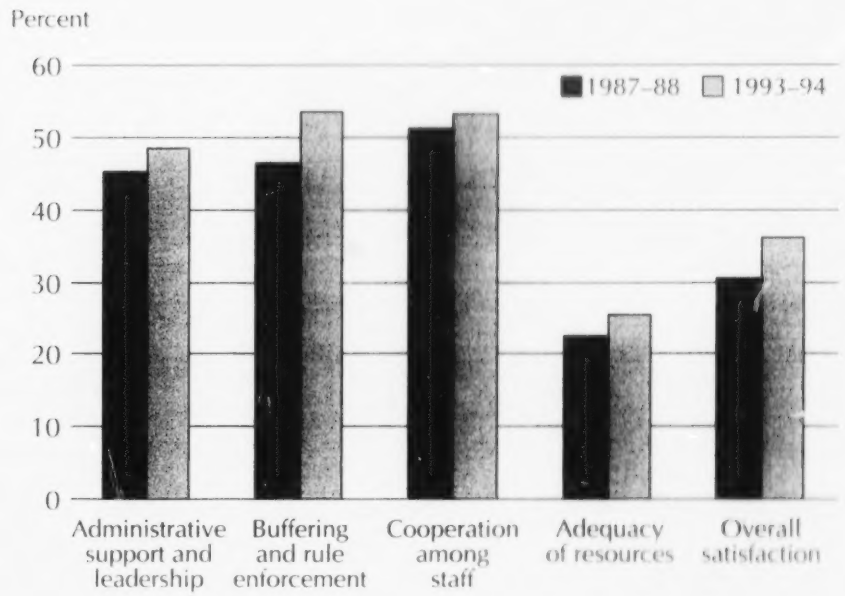
Teacher Satisfaction: Private Schools

- In both 1987–88 and 1993–94, private school teachers were more likely than public school teachers to be highly satisfied with key aspects of their jobs.
- Moreover, private school teachers were more likely to be highly satisfied overall in 1993–94 than in 1987–88.

Percentage of private school teachers who were highly satisfied with aspects of their working conditions: 1987–88 and 1993–94



SOURCE: Schools and Staffing Survey: 1987–88 and 1993–94 (Teacher Questionnaire).

AVERAGE

CLASS SIZE

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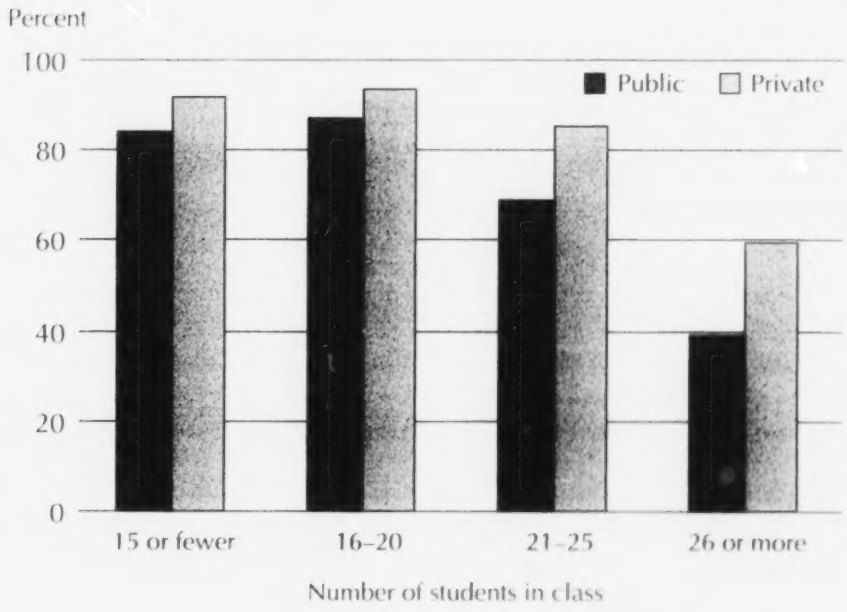
Average Class Size

Teachers in public schools had somewhat larger classes, on average, than teachers in private schools (24 versus 20 students, respectively). In both sectors, the average class size for elementary and secondary teachers differed only minimally (data not shown below).

- Teachers' satisfaction with class size fell as the size of their classes rose.
- Teachers in private schools were more likely than teachers in public schools to be satisfied with their class size, no matter how large their classes actually were.

Percentage of teachers who were satisfied with their class size, by sector and size of class: 1993–94



SOURCE: Schools and Staffing Survey: 1993–94 (Teacher Questionnaire).

For more information . . .

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If you have specific questions about the SASS questionnaire, e-mail sassdata@ed.gov or call (800) 221-1204.

The SASS website (http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/sass.html) provides a complete list of publications that report findings from the SASS. Through the website you can order free paper copies of those publications, or browse or download electronic versions of the most recent documents.

In addition to ordering from the website, you can order free copies of these publications by calling Ed Pubs toll free at (877) 433-7827.

Selected titles that might be of interest include the following:

- *America's Teachers: Profile of a Profession, 1993–94* (NCES 97460)
- *Characteristics of American Indian and Alaska Native Education* (NCES 97451)
- *Characteristics of Stayers, Movers, and Leavers: Results from the Teacher Followup Survey: 1994–95* (NCES 97450)
- *How Widespread Is Site-based Decisionmaking in the Public Schools?* (NCES 97908)
- *Job Satisfaction Among America's Teachers: Effects of Workplace Conditions, Background Characteristics, and Teacher Compensation* (NCES 97471)
- *Public School Districts in the United States: A Statistical Profile: 1987–88 to 1993–94* (NCES 98203)
- *Public and Private School Principals in the United States: A Statistical Profile, 1987–88 to 1993–94* (NCES 97455)
- *School Library Media Centers* (NCES 98282)
- *Schools and Staffing in the United States: A Statistical Profile, 1993–94* (NCES 96124)
- *Toward Better Teaching: Professional Development in 1993–94* (NCES 98230)

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